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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Complete listing of the claims.

We claim:

1. (Currently Amended) An end-of-use protective element (3) for needles for perfusions, transfusions and suchlike which envisages the complete insertion and locking of a needle (6) fitted with wings (7) within a protective case, characterised by the fact that the said element is composed of a first portion (1) and a second portion (2) which are reciprocally constrained by means of a connecting element (4) at the time of production and shipping and which are separate at the time of use, said separation being rendered possible by the detachment of the said connecting element, and by the fact that the first portion (1) is fitted with a pan (12) and the second portion is fitted with at least two first ridges (20) and at least two second ridges (24), said pan and said first and second ridges being positioned in the respective portions in such a way that they are located on the internal sides of the protective element (3), in a reciprocally opposing position, when the said protective element is in use; the first and second portions being constrained together, when in use, via locking means (22) and corresponding slits (18) in the rear part of the said protective element, the pan (12) being centered with the longitudinal central axis of the first portion (1), said axis corresponding to the longitudinal central axis of the first portion (1), said axis corresponding to the longitudinal axis of the entire protective device (3) in both its extended configuration and its use configuration; said pan being designed to act as a container for the drops of residual blood that may leak from said needle (6) after its use and its retraction into said protective element, a frontal protrusion (14) being positioned

in front of said pan (12) facing the front part (13); said protrusion being designed to constitute both a shoulder for the point of the needle (6) and a further barrier against blood leaking from the protective element (3), in the area corresponding with its front part, the height of the first ridges (20) being equal to the distance, when the protective element (3) is in use, between the lower surface of the second portion (2) and the steps (16) on the first portion (1); said height being designed to permit, when the protective element (3) is in use, the co-operation to prevent blood leaking from the protective element (3) in the area corresponding with the external edges (8) of said protective element, the distance between the second ridges (24) corresponding with the distance between the steps (16) and a groove is created (15a, 15b, 15c) on a base surface (9) which extends, essentially, along the entire length of the first portion (1) and is designed to remain inside the said protective element when the latter is in use, the height of the second ridges (24) being equal to the distance that exists, when then the protective element (3) is in use, between the lower surface of the second portion (2) and the base surface (9) of the said protective element minus the thickness of the wings (7); said height being designed to permit, when the protective element (3) is in use, cooperation between the said second ridges with the upper surface of the said wings; said cooperation being designed to constitute a further protective element against the possibility of blood leaking out from the protective element (3) laterally in the area corresponding with the groove (15c), each step (16) separating the base surface (9) from the groove (15b) on both sides of the central longitudinal axis of the first portion (1).

2. (Original) A protective element according to claim 1, characterised by the fact that that first portion (1), the second portion (2) and the connecting element (4) are created by a moulding process in a single operation.

3. ~~(Cancelled) A protective element according to claim 1, characterised by the fact that the pan (12) is centred with the longitudinal central axis of the first portion (1), said axis corresponding to the longitudinal central axis of the first portion 1, said axis corresponding to the longitudinal axis of the entire protective device (3) in both its extended configuration and its use configuration; the said pan being designed to act as~~

~~a container for the drops of residual blood that may leak from needle (6) after its use and its retraction into the said protective element.~~

4. ~~(Cancelled) A protective element according to claim 1, characterised by the fact that a frontal protrusion (14) is positioned in front of the pan (12) facing the front part (13); said protrusion being designed to constitute both a shoulder for the point of the needle (6) and a further barrier against blood leaking from the protective element (3), in the area corresponding with its front part.~~

5. ~~(Cancelled) A protective element according to claim 1, characterised by the fact that the height of the first ridges (20) is equal to the distance, when the protective element (3) is in use, between the lower surface of the second portion (2) and the steps (16) on the first portion (1); said height being designed to permit, when the protective element (3) is in use, the co-operation being designed to prevent blood leaking from the protective element (3) in the area corresponding with the external edges (8) of the said protective element.~~

6. ~~(Cancelled) A protective element according to claim 1 characterised by the fact that the distance between the second ridges (24) corresponds with the distance between the steps (16).~~

7. ~~(Cancelled) A protective element according to claim 1, characterised by the fact that on a base surface (9), designed to remain inside the said protective element when the latter is in use, there is a groove created (15a, 15b, 15c) which extends, essentially, along the entire length of the first portion (1).~~

8. ~~(Cancelled) A protective element according to claim 1, characterised by the fact that the height of the second ridges (24) is equal to the distance that exists, when then the protective element (3) is in use, between the lower surface of the second portion (2) and the base surface (9) of the said protective element minus the thickness of the wings (7); said height being designed to permit, when the protective element (3) is in use, cooperation between the said second ridges with the upper surface of the said~~

~~wings; the said cooperation being designed to constitute a further protective element against the possibility of blood leaking out from the protective element (3) laterally in the area in corresponding with the groove (15c).~~

9. (Cancelled) ~~A protective element according to claim 1, characterised by the fact that each step (16) separates the base surface (9) from the groove (15b) on both sides of the central longitudinal axis of the first portion (1).~~